

# A DYNAMIC SUMMER INTERNSHIP AT CSHP



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It was November of my first year of pharmacy at the University of Toronto when I first heard about the summer internship position at the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP). As soon as I read about the position, I knew it was the way I would like to spend my summer! I applied for the position in my first year but was unsuccessful. I tried again in my second year. That time, I was much more successful!

I started my work in May when I walked into the small, close-knit national office of CSHP in Ottawa. The ladies who work there were all very welcoming and it was quite easy to feel at home. Throughout the summer, I was given several different projects to work on. While all of the projects were independent, all the help and support I needed was available as soon as I asked. I really enjoyed the freedom of working independently; if I was tiring of one project, I could switch over and work on another for a while. Some of the projects I worked on this summer included: designing and administering a survey on experiential training for students in

hospitals, assisting with the review of the Society's bylaws, answering questions emailed to the Society, and preparing a cost-benefit analysis about CSHP becoming a Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy (CCCEP) accredited provider.

When I was not working on independent projects, I spent a lot of my time preparing for and participating in meetings. I sat in on meetings of the Executive and Council of CSHP, the Practice Standards Steering Committee, the Board of the Research and Education Foundation and the Membership Committee, to name a few. These meetings were all with volunteer hospital pharmacists from across Canada who generously donate their time for the betterment of our profession. I was very impressed by the number of volunteers as well as the amount of hours they were willing to put into the work of CSHP. Through these meetings, I was able to speak to hospital pharmacists from across the country who have all followed very unique career paths. I am coming away from this summer amazed by all of the different opportunities available to pharmacists, some in avenues I would never have dreamed of.

Throughout the summer, I also had a few experiences outside of the office. I spent a day at the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) office learning about the programs they operate. While there, I learned about their three programs: Health Technology Assessment, the Common Drug Review, and the Canadian Optimal Medication Prescribing & Utilization Service (COMPUS). I also attended the National Patient Safety Roundtable, hosted by the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and Accreditation Canada, which involved different patient safety stakeholders from across the country. My most exciting experience away from CSHP was my two-week placement at The Ottawa Hospital. During my training, I learned firsthand about the hospital pharmacist's role by observing my preceptor during a few of her typical days on a General Medicine ward. While there, I helped her take medication histories, suggested changes to patients' medication regimes and answered drug information questions from other members of the health care team. I also spent a few days doing rotations in other parts of the hospital; I spent time with pharmacists in the Emergency Room, the Oncology Department, the Drug Information Service, the Geriatric Day Unit and the Intensive Care Unit. These visits were so eye-opening, they really made the whole experience extremely invaluable. It would be impossible to come away from the two-week visit at the Ottawa Hospital and not want to pursue a career in hospital pharmacy!

The final highlight of the summer was the week that I spent in Winnipeg for CSHP's annual Summer Educational Sessions (SES). Before the conference began, I attended three full days of CSHP Executive and Council meetings where I observed animated discussions about the hot issues in hospital pharmacy. Following this, I attended three days of educational sessions and snagged some great loot from the exhibitor's fair. The social events in the evenings were a great time for networking with hospital pharmacists and industry partners from across the country, although they also made the whole week extremely exhausting!

Coming away from this summer, I can certainly say I have learned a wealth of things about the big picture of hospital pharmacy in Canada. I hope to work next summer in a hospital pharmacy so I can see how the issues that I learned about this summer are progressing. I would definitely recommend this job for anyone who is considering a career in hospital pharmacy after graduation. The CSHP summer internship program is an excellent way to immerse yourself in the current issues of hospital pharmacy as well as to meet accomplished (and fun!) hospital pharmacists from across the country.